

**REMARKS**

Claims 1-6 and 8-33 are pending in the application. Claims 17 and 33 are allowed. Claims 1-3, 5, 8-20, 25 and 29-32 are rejected. Claims 4, 6, 21-24 and 26-28 are objected to.

**35 U.S.C. § 112:**

Claims 31 and 32 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite. Claims 31 and 32 were added in the previous Amendment to recite that an “identical die is used as the second lower die and the third lower die.” Independent claims 1 and 18 each recites a first lower die, a second lower die and a third lower die. The Examiner asserts that the independent claims recite the second die and the third die separately, which the Examiner contends is contrary to the recitations of claims 1 and 32 that describe the second and third lower die as being identical.

Applicants respectfully submit that independent claims 1 and 18 do not require the second lower die and the third lower die to be different. In other words, there is nothing recited in claims 1 and 18 that would not allow the second and the third dies to be identical. Further, claims 31 and 32 do not require the second lower die and third lower die to be *a single* die. Therefore, Applicants respectfully submit that claims 31 and 32 are not indefinite.

**35 U.S.C. § 102 (b):**

Claims 1-3, 5, 18-20, 25 and 30 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by Schey (U.S. Patent No. 4,400,965). Claims 1-3, 5, 12, 15, 18-20, 25, 31 and 32 are also rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by Kondo (U.S. Patent No. 4,245,491).

Figures 4-10 of Schey are applied against independent claims 1 and 18. The Examiner asserts this reference discloses an upper die 26, 31, a first lower die 27, a second lower die 34 and a third lower die 49. The Examiner also asserts that the unpenetrated hole is punched by the upper die 31 (Figure 9) while a flat portion of the metal board is supported by the third lower die 49. The Examiner also applies Figures 3(II) and 3(III) of Kondo against the features of independent claims 1 and 18.

An exemplary feature of the present invention is the second lower die, which is operable to form a flat portion on the protrusion, without the first lower die. Independent claims 1 and 18 are amended to further define this feature. At least this feature is not disclosed by Schey or Kondo. Instead, the member in both Schey and Kondo (associated with the claimed first lower die) must be involved in the formation of the portion corresponding to the claimed flat portion. Therefore, Schey and Kondo do not disclose the unique combination of features in amended claims 1 and 18, such that the rejection thereof under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) should be withdrawn. Dependent claims 2, 3, 5, 12, 15, 18, 19, 20, 25 and 30, 31 and 32 are deemed patentable over the applied art at least due to their respective dependences on claims 1 and 18.

**35 U.S.C. § 103(a):**

Claims 8-16 and 29 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Schey. Applicants submit that claims 8-16 and 29 are patentable over Schey at least by virtue of their respective dependencies upon independent claims 1 and 18. This is because the features of amended claims 1 and 18 are neither taught nor suggested by Schey. Therefore, claims 8-16 and

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29 are deemed allowable over Schey at least by virtue of their respective dependencies upon claims 1 and 18.

In view of the above, reconsideration and allowance of this application are now believed to be in order, and such actions are hereby solicited. If any points remain in issue which the Examiner feels may be best resolved through a personal or telephone interview, the Examiner is kindly requested to contact the undersigned at the telephone number listed below.

The USPTO is directed and authorized to charge all required fees, except for the Issue Fee and the Publication Fee, to Deposit Account No. 19-4880. Please also credit any overpayments to said Deposit Account.

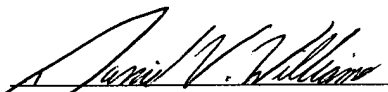
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